UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:

FIRE ON BOARD THE ISLAND LADY *
* ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18FM010

PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA JANUARY 14, 2018

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Interview of: JOHN CROWE

Casino Dealer

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

APPEARANCES:

CWO U.S. coast Guard

Guard (Civilian)

BETH FIFER, Company Representative Tropical Breeze Casino

STACY FALCONE, Company Representative Tropical Breeze Casino

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2	INTERVIEW OF JOHN CROWE		
3	BY CWO		
4	Q. Let me begin, can you tell me give me your background,		
5	your education and professional background, sir?		
6	A. Went to San Diego State College, graduated from there. Was		
7	in the military for 2 years, drafted, and been working on the boat		
8	for going on 10 years now. Prior to that I was a dealer in Las		
9	Vegas and Atlantic City.		
10	Q. And your position at SunCruz has always been that of a		
11	dealer?		
12	A. A dealer, yes.		
13	Q. And how long have you worked for SunCruz, sir?		
14	A. Since November of '08, so 9 years and counting.		
15	Q. And what time did you arrive to work on the 14th of January?		
16	That was the day of the fire.		
17	A. Okay. I think it was a 3:30 start, so I was at the boat at		
18	3:00.		
19	Q. All right, sir. And so can you walk me through your		
20	afternoon?		
21	A. Yes. We left the dock I can't say when we left the dock.		
22	I presume it was around 3:30. I always sit on the topside and		

At some point as we left the channel, the boat slowed down,

which is not unusual, because if you have other boats coming the

read a book, so that's where I was for the whole time.

23

24

- 1 other way, wake and everything. And then suddenly the other
- 2 passengers all started coming upstairs. Didn't know exactly why,
- 3 but it became pretty apparent when you started seeing smoke. The
- 4 | boat was moving, but I guess it was turning around. I wasn't
- 5 aware of that, that we were going back to the dock.
- There was a lot of smoke, but not so much that you couldn't
- 7 breathe. And then suddenly some flames started coming up on the
- 8 starboard side and that's when things started going pretty fast
- 9 then. The crew told the passengers to go to the bow, down the
- 10 steps or stairs in front of the bridge, to go to the bow and they
- 11 | were going to take the boat to land, and they'd be getting off the
- 12 boat.
- 13 There was -- I guess we had 50 people on board, but a lot of
- 14 people crowding around that stairs or ladder, so I didn't try to
- 15 fight there. I just stayed on the deck and waited for things to
- 16 calm down, until I could get there. But then it became -- a lot
- of smoke. You couldn't even see anything down there anymore, so I
- 18 just started thinking about, well, I'll just jump off the top
- 19 deck. And eventually that's what I did.
- 20 Q. So looking at this picture, can you point to where you jumped
- 21 off, sir?
- 22 A. Yeah. Okay. This is where I was initially sitting here.
- 23 That's where I started out.
- 24 Q. All right. So you're pointing at the starboard --
- 25 A. That's the starboard --

- 1 Q. -- bridge, behind the bridge.
- 2 A. That's where I was sitting initially. Passengers came up,
- 3 and then when they had the passengers go around, I stayed on this
- 4 | side over here, on the port side. There were no flames on the
- 5 port side. The flames started coming up here, and smoke and
- 6 flames from the back.
- 7 Q. So you're pointing towards the upper deck, port side,
- 8 midship, is where you were located?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. To stay out of the smoke?
- 11 A. Stay out of the smoke and I never felt like I was in any
- 12 danger up there. It seemed like I had plenty of options left.
- 13 Like I said, there was no flames on the port side.
- So I was looking for a place to jump. There's a gate down
- 15 there on the port side where they board, and there were people
- 16 getting off at that point, so I went a little further back to jump
- 17 | so I wouldn't jump on them. That was pretty much it.
- 18 Q. What was the depth of water you jumped into?
- 19 A. Well, you could see the water was clear, so you could see
- 20 | that it was pretty shallow, maybe about 3 feet. I went further
- 21 | back to get a little slightly deeper part, and I'd say maybe it
- 22 was about 4 feet, but I never -- I jumped, and when I jumped, the
- 23 way I landed, I went completely underwater and I never touched
- 24 | bottom. So when I got up, I turned out to be in waist-deep water,
- 25 so --

- 1 Q. You were able to stand?
- 2 A. Yeah. I started swimming initially but then I looked around
- 3 and everybody was walking, so I thought, well, maybe I ought to do
- 4 | that. So, yeah, it was waist-deep water. It was pretty easy to
- 5 walk in to land.
- 6 Q. Okay. And so did you stand outside these life lines onto --
- 7 onto this like combing or --
- 8 A When I jumped?
- 9 Q. Yes, sir.
- 10 A. Yes. Yes, I stepped over that on the other side, but -- so I
- 11 was on the other side of this, and I held onto the railing with my
- 12 hand and then inched down this way so I could get closer to the
- 13 | water, and I pushed off and went in.
- 14 Q. And so how far of a jump would you say that was?
- 15 A. I'd say if I was jumping right from here to there, it would
- 16 be about where a roof would be on a house. But since I dangled
- 17 down a bit, it wasn't that much of a jump really.
- 18 Q. Feet?
- 19 A. How many feet would you say that is right there?
- 20 Q. Well, you can stand in here, in the main passenger
- 21 compartment. You figure this takes up probably three-quarters of
- 22 | an engine room, height.
- 23 A. Right. Well, I'm hanging from there, from the rail. So when
- 24 I pushed off, I was probably right above these windows here. I
- 25 don't know how many feet that would be, 6 or 7 feet.

- 1 Q. Okay, 6 or 7 feet?
- 2 A. Yeah. It wasn't much of a jump.
- 3 Q. At any time -- if we go back and you're reading your book,
- 4 you're up on the --
- 5 A. Top deck, bridge.
- 6 Q. Did you ever look out? Did you ever see just normal smoke as
- 7 | the vessel transited through the channel, smoke that would
- 8 basically cause this discoloration on the transom?
- 9 A. No, I've been making this trip so many times, I don't pay any
- 10 attention to that. I go up and there and I just read and not
- 11 paying attention to what's going on behind me. I didn't smell
- 12 smoke or anything until the passengers started coming up there and
- 13 then I realized -- when I saw it and smelled it, then I realized
- 14 that's why they were up there. But otherwise, I was pretty much
- 15 unaware of what was going on.
- 16 Q. Okay. At any point did you look over the side to get a
- 17 better look, see where the smoke was coming from?
- 18 A. No, it -- you mean where it was originating from?
- 19 Q. Yes, sir.
- 20 A. No, no, no. That seems liked -- like I said, between the
- 21 | time you saw the smoke and the flame started coming up is pretty
- 22 | -- it wasn't a lot of time between that, so I wouldn't -- that
- 23 | wouldn't concern me, where it was coming from.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. Like I said, the port side was clear at all times so that was

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- 1 \parallel -- I just felt that was the side to stay on, so --
- 2 Q. That's fine. Did you -- when you said the passengers started
- 3 arriving on the upper deck, was there a crew member leading them?
- 4 Was there instructions being given that you recall? Did anyone
- 5 ever say, hey, we have a fire on board?
- 6 A. No. No, I never heard the word fire, no. A crew member
- 7 | leading them -- I had the impression there was a crew member
- 8 directing them from below, but I don't recall seeing a crew member
- 9 actually leading them.
- 10 When they had -- we were going to abandon the ship, then
- 11 | there was a crew person directing them to go to the bow and all
- 12 that.
- 13 Q. Did that -- what were the instructions or what do you recall
- 14 hearing from that crew member?
- 15 A. That we were going -- well, obviously the boat had already --
- 16 was heading towards land. And we had a pretty soft impact, so you
- weren't thrown off balance or anything. He was telling that they
- 18 were going to exit from the bow, and he directed them around the
- 19 | bridge to the ladder, and I think things went pretty smoothly.
- 20 But there were, what, 40 or so passengers and I think you can only
- 21 | go down the ladder one at a time. So that's why I stayed behind.
- 22 I didn't want to get in the clutter up there.
- 23 Q. Do you believe you were the last one off the upper deck or
- 24 was someone else left?
- 25 A. Well, I thought I was the last one off, but after seeing the

- 1 | videos, I could tell when I jumped, I could see a couple -- at
- 2 | least one other person came off after me, so --
- 3 Q. From the very top deck?
- 4 A From the top deck, yes.
- 5 Q. Okay. So there was a video of the port side of the vessel
- 6 from that aspect?
- 7 A. Yeah, on the news, yes. Yeah, several different versions of
- 8 it. But as people started getting it on their iPhones, we saw
- 9 more and more of them afterwards. And so people were trying to
- 10 | identify ourselves in these pictures, and we said, well, that's
- 11 me, that's me. My jump was an awkward looking one, so I thought,
- 12 oh, that was me. But after that, I saw somebody else go off. It
- 13 might have been the captain. Somebody went in very professionally
- 14 with their hands to their sides, like a spear at an angle, and I
- 15 | thought I wish that was me, but --
- 16 Q. All right.
- 17 A. No.
- 18 Q. Do you recall, did a crew member make a sweep or anything?
- 19 Did they direct you to jump off?
- 20 A. No, no. They were all -- the crew, once they directed the
- 21 passengers to the bow, that's where they went. One was at the top
- 22 of the ladder helping them down the ladder, and one was at the
- 23 | bottom of the ladder telling where they're going to get off on the
- 24 bow. So no, I was alone up there. But like I said, the fire was
- 25 on the starboard side; the port side was completely open, so it

- 1 | wasn't -- I felt like I still had plenty of options to jump, if I
- 2 had to.
- 3 Q. Yes, sir. Now, going to your duties and responsibilities as
- 4 | a dealer on the Tropical Breeze, can you explain your duties and
- 5 responsibilities for your job?
- 6 A. For my job? Yeah, I deal craps when I'm on the crap table.
- 7 We work an hour on, 20 minutes off. We generally go out for the
- 8 whole day from 11:00 in the morning till midnight or thereabouts,
- 9 so about 11-hour day. That's about it.
- 10 Q. Do you wear a uniform?
- 11 A. Yes. We wear a white shirt, black pants.
- 12 Q. And in the event of emergency, what are your actions or what
- 13 | are your responsibilities?
- 14 A. Well, we never had any emergency on the big boat. But when I
- 15 first started, it was some type of training in a way. We had a
- 16 list of things that we were -- 8 years, so I'm not quite sure.
- 17 But a list of what different jobs people would have. I think for
- 18 dealers and such, that you'd be standing in a doorway, maybe,
- 19 directing people where to go. Other than that, I don't think I
- 20 have any emergency duties, not really.
- 21 Q. So you're not sure?
- 22 A. Well, we had --
- 23 Q. The best you can remember --
- 24 A. The best I can remember, we never -- you know, we never ran
- 25 through a drill or anything but we knew we had a job and it might

- 1 be, like I said, standing in a doorway telling people to go out
- 2 | this way or go someplace else.
- 3 Q. Yes, sir.
- 4 A. But that's about it, as far as I know.
- 5 Q. There's never -- okay. Have you ever participated in a drill
- 6 on board the *Tropical Breeze* or the shuttle boat?
- 7 A. No. No, I haven't.
- 8 Q. Do you know if they take place? Do they take place when
- 9 you're not there maybe?
- 10 A. Drills?
- 11 Q. Yes.
- 12 A. I'm not aware of any. I think the crew members are trained
- 13 and they do make announcements over the loud speaker to tell you
- 14 what to do in case of an emergency and stuff.
- 15 Q. Okay. Did you happen to take any photos or videos that day?
- 16 A. No. I don't have an iPhone.
- 17 Q. Okay. Had you ever been out on a trip where the vessel had
- 18 to turn around and come back in for repair or for maintenance?
- 19 A. Yes. Yes, we have -- the week before we had something caught
- 20 | in the propeller blade, and then we had to go back to the dock to
- 21 have that taken care of.
- 22 Q. Do you recall who the captain was on that trip?
- 23 A. The propeller blade one?
- 24 Q. Yes, sir.
- 25 A. No, I don't know, no.

- 1 Q. Do you recall if it was a weekday or a weekend?
- 2 A. I generally work weekends, so it would be a weekend, yes.
- 3 Q. Okay. So would we have been looking at -- I'm just trying to
- 4 | narrow it down a little bit because you say -- well, how did you
- 5 know that there was something caught in the propeller blade?
- 6 A. I guess when the shuttle stopped in mid-channel and -- I
- 7 | think that was just discovered by someone, was caught in the
- 8 propeller blade. And we turned around in the channel. I thought
- 9 that was -- it's kind of tough to turn around in the channel, so I
- 10 never seen them do that in the channel, but -- then we got back to
- 11 the dock.
- 12 Q. Especially on one engine.
- 13 A. Yes, very slowly, very slowly. Yeah.
- 14 Q. And I don't remember if I asked, but do you recall who the
- 15 captain was?
- 16 A. No, not on that day, no.
- 17 Q. Okay. Do you know if it was after Christmas or before
- 18 | Christmas?
- 19 A. Oh, you talking about the propeller blade?
- 20 Q. Yes, sir.
- 21 A. Oh, after Christmas.
- 22 O. Was it after New Year's?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 | O. So really we're only talking maybe a 2-week period between
- New Year's and the 14th; so it was sometime in there?

- 1 A. I'd say it was the week before, yes.
- 2 Q. Okay. So it was the week before. And how much of a delay
- 3 | would that cause?
- 4 A. Initially they didn't think it would be that much of a delay,
- 5 but I believe they had to call in some professionals to -- I don't
- 6 know if they dived in the water or what, but to get it out. We
- 7 | were sent home and told to come back a certain time. So we lost a
- 8 whole shift, I think.
- 9 Q. Okay. Okay. And do you remember if it was the starboard
- 10 engine or the port engine?
- 11 A. Oh, no.
- 12 Q. You wouldn't know that? Okay. Do you recall who the crew
- 13 members were? Maybe not the captain, but some of the crew
- 14 members?
- 15 A. On the day of the propeller?
- 16 Q. Yes, sir. Like who made the announcement? Who said, hey,
- 17 Mr. Crowe, you've got to go home today?
- 18 A. Well, that would have been when we got back to the dock. We
- 19 were still waiting to see if it was going to be repaired on the
- 20 spot, how complicated a problem it was. So the person working the
- 21 | counter, I think, probably told my supervisor, and my supervisor
- 22 | told me -- told all of us that we'd be coming back at 3:30 or 7,
- 23 whenever it was.
- 24 O. Okay. And do you recall, did you come back at the second
- 25 shift?

- 1 A. Oh, yes. Yes.
- 2 Q. Okay. And so other than that casualty, do you recall any
- 3 other times where a trip has been canceled or postponed or
- 4 delayed? Recently. I understand you've worked there 8 years,
- 5 so --
- 6 A. Yeah. Well, shuttles get postponed and delayed all the time.
- 7 Not necessarily for mechanical reasons or anything.
- 8 Q. I would just be interested in mechanical delays.
- 9 A. Yeah. No, and we wouldn't necessarily be privy to that
- 10 information, why something is being delayed.
- 11 Q. Right. But it seems to me like as an employee you would know
- 12 whether or not it was canceled. If you got underway on the boat
- 13 and then you turned around --
- 14 A. Oh, yeah.
- 15 Q. -- you would definitely know the reason you were turning
- 16 around.
- 17 A. Yeah, that would be different. Not necessarily. Not
- 18 | necessarily. But if it was something mechanical, like I suppose
- 19 | we might know it, but not necessarily because they told us it
- 20 | would just be --
- 21 O. You'd have a hunch?
- 22 A. A hunch or scuttlebutt, that's all. They don't feel
- 23 obligated to tell us why the boat's not operating.
- 24 Q. Okay. So there was no other times that you turned around
- 25 recently?

- 1 A. No. No.
- 2 Q. That you can recall?
- 3 A. It was very unusual when we turned around in the channel,
- 4 | like I said. We didn't actually think the boat could turn around
- 5 | in the channel. So I'd say that was a first for me. So recently,
- 6 no, those were the only two instances, the fire and the propeller
- 7 blade.
- 8 Q. Okay, all right. And did you see the divers or whoever made
- 9 | the repairs? Did you see them come to the boat?
- 10 A. No. They told us that that cruise is canceled. So we all
- 11 | went out and got something to eat or something like that, so --
- 12 Q. Okay. And so do you recall what time you got back to the
- 13 dock?
- 14 A. To go out on the next cruise?
- 15 Q. No, from the one that was canceled.
- 16 A. Because of the propeller blade?
- 17 Q. Yes, sir.
- 18 A. Well, we never got out of the channel. So if it was an 11:00
- 19 cruise, it would probably be about 11:15, 11:30. We were moving
- 20 | very slowly, so maybe quarter till 12, maybe 11:30 or quarter till
- 21 12.
- 22 Q. Okay. And then the next cruise that day that you believe you
- 23 | went on would have been at --
- 24 A. 3:30.
- 25 Q. 3:30. So it only -- the repair only took, what, 3 hours?

- 1 A. Whatever they did, yeah. I think they just said that
- 2 something was tangled around the -- we heard it was like a crab
- 3 | trap or something. We don't know that for sure, but -- so, yeah,
- 4 somebody just had to get that uncleared.
- 5 Q. I see.
- 6 CWO I think that's it.
- 7 MR. CROWE: That's it?
- 8 CWO For me.
- 9 MR. CROWE: Oh.
- 10 CWO Hopefully if I missed anything Mr. will
- 11 pick it up.
- 12 BY MR.
- 13 Q. When you get underway you said that you were on the top
- 14 reading a book, and are there speakers that you can hear
- 15 announcements being made?
- 16 A. Yes, they have a speaker right behind the bridge.
- 17 Q. Okay. Were there any announcements made as the vessel was
- 18 departing dock or as the vessel was transiting to the channel?
- 19 A. I think they gave their standard emergency instructions about
- 20 where life jackets are located and things like that, and not to --
- 21 | if you're transiting the vessel, to hold onto a rail and things
- 22 | like that. Just standard safety instructions. They give that
- 23 every cruise.
- 24 0. Has the company given you any maritime training or
- 25 responsibilities when you're underway, other than being a dealer?

- 1 A. Like I said, when I first started there was some written
- 2 instructions on what we were to do in case of an emergency. I
- 3 believe that was, like I said, somebody like a dealer, you were to
- 4 stand in a doorway and direct traffic. But mostly you would be
- 5 | assigned by your supervisor as to what to do.
- 6 Q. Do you know where any firefighting equipment is on the
- 7 vessel, sir?
- 8 A. Fire extinguishers, I suppose you're talking about.
- 9 Q. Or any other firefighting apparatuses, hoses or anything like
- 10 that.
- 11 A. No, I don't.
- 12 Q. That's a perfectly fine answer, sir.
- 13 When you first saw the smoke, what color was it the first
- 14 time that you saw smoke? White? Gray? Brown? Black?
- 15 A. Well, I'd say it was probably white but then it quickly
- 16 turned to a darker, a darker color, and that's when it became
- 17 apparent it was not a usual problem. And just as soon as you
- 18 noticed that, I pretty much noticed the flames. And that's when
- 19 things started moving fast.
- 20 Q. Okay. I see you wearing a bandage on your left hand. Was
- 21 | that an injury on the boat or is that self-inflicted after the
- 22 accident?
- 23 A. That was when I was crawling in the mud, I scraped it, but
- 24 when I put a Band-Aid on it, the adhesive made it worse, so --
- 25 | it's just a very small gauze, but very dramatic to put this whole

- 1 thing on.
- 2 Q. So you didn't have stitches or anything like that?
- 3 A. No, no. It's just a scrape.
- 4 CWO Is it infected or anything? Because it looks a
- 5 little swollen for a scrape.
- 6 MR. CROWE: Well, I think I put the bandage on a little
- 7 | tight. The adhesive is what gave it adverse reaction to the
- 8 scrape. The area it covers is right here but I couldn't think of
- 9 any other way to get a bandage to stay in place, so I just put a
- 10 gauze under there so it would have no adhesive on it.
- BY MR.
- 12 Q. On the outbound transit, I know you're into a book, and when
- 13 I'm reading I'm not usually --
- 14 A. Right.
- 15 Q. -- listening or paying attention, but did you happen to
- 16 notice the speed of the vessel during the outbound transit? Were
- 17 | you on plane? Were you at idle?
- 18 A. Well, we had just gotten out of the channel, if we had gotten
- 19 out of the channel at all, so we'd be going pretty slowly. But we
- 20 | hadn't started our trip out to the boat where you'd go to full
- 21 speed or anything. I don't think we had hit the full speed yet.
- 22 Usually you can feel that when it lifts up.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. But I'm just guessing at that really.
- 25 Q. Okay. When you -- after the boat turned around, did you hear

- 1 | the engines change pitch or rpm? Did you hear any changes,
- 2 | fluctuations in the engines?
- 3 A. No. No, I didn't.
- 4 Q. Do you know how to get into the engine room?
- 5 A. No, I don't.
- 6 Q. So I would assume -- my next question, have you ever been in
- 7 | the engine room, is no also?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. I'm a quick study.
- 10 A. That is correct, no.
- 11 Q. Thank you, sir. And I would assume you never saw any crew
- members going into the engine room during the emergency?
- 13 A. No, I did not. The engine room was below deck, so I was up
- 14 on the upper deck, so no.
- Q. Do you recall any other passengers or crew members that
- 16 jumped around the same time you did? Anyone that you know of went
- 17 before you?
- 18 A. From the upper deck, I didn't see anybody jump from the upper
- 19 deck.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. Except in retrospect when I saw videos, so --
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. No, the people that were going into the water were on the
- 24 first deck.
- 25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. And they didn't have to jump. They could just kind of drop
- 2 | in.
- 3 Q. So from your perspective, when you jumped off, you had your
- 4 graceful swan dive.
- 5 A. Um-hum.
- 6 Q. And then somebody with the one that made news, to where
- 7 | they're pointed like a spear --
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. -- but you don't recognize who those people area or anybody
- 10 else?
- 11 A. No. No, I didn't.
- 12 Q. That's fair.
- 13 A. I could only recognize myself because of the way I jumped
- 14 and --
- 15 Q. Yes, sir. Did you observe any actions of the captain or the
- 16 crew during the evacuation of the vessel or were you just with the
- 17 passengers?
- 18 A. During the evacuation?
- 19 Q. Did you see any of the captain or the crew moving about the
- 20 boat during the evacuation?
- 21 A. The evacuation being when they were on the bow getting in the
- 22 water?
- 23 Q. Yes, sir.
- 24 A. No. Well, that was out of my line of sight because they were
- 25 down there. I knew they were down there and knew they were

- 1 directing the people into the water, but --
- 2 Q. Any announcements over the public address system?
- 3 A. I don't recall -- once the flames were going, there was a lot
- 4 of yelling and screaming.
- 5 Q. I can imagine.
- 6 MR. Thank you. Mr. Carlson, do you have anything?
- 7 MR. CARLSON: A couple. Thank you.
- 8 BY MR. CARLSON:
- 9 Q. When you came back in, when the boat had the failed propeller
- 10 blade --
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. -- was that the *Island Lady* or was -- might have been the
- 13 | bigger casino boat? Which vessel was it?
- 14 A. Oh. I think it was the bigger boat, now that you mentioned
- 15 it, yes. Yeah.
- 16 Q. So to your recollection --
- 17 A. Yeah, because that's the first voyage of the day.
- 18 Q. So it was the bigger boat?
- 19 A. It was the bigger boat, because you go out on the bigger boat
- 20 | in the morning. Then the shuttles run the rest of the day, so
- 21 yes.
- 22 Q. Any -- so you don't recall any need to turn around and come
- 23 in due to mechanical issues on the Island Lady, to the best of
- 24 your recollection?
- 25 A. No, no.

- 1 Q. You mentioned in terms of your duties and responsibilities,
- 2 | when you got started, you got assignments to generally stand at
- 3 the door and give directions, otherwise told by your supervisor
- 4 | what to do?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Who's your supervisor?
- 7 A. Right now the supervisor is Daniel -- some Egyptian last
- 8 name. I'm sorry.
- 9 Q. You'd know him if you saw him?
- 10 A. That guy sitting out there.
- 11 Q. Okay. And what's his job?
- 12 A. He's casino manager.
- 13 Q. Casino manager. So casino manager is your supervisor?
- 14 A. That would be my -- yes, yes.
- MR. CARLSON: Okay. Thank you.
- 16 BY MR.
- 17 Q. The rope in the propeller, were you on the casino boat then?
- 18 A. Yes. I'm sorry, yes.
- 19 Q. That's fine.
- 20 A. It didn't occur to me at the time.
- 21 Q. A couple times you've said scuttlebutt and that's great. Any
- 22 | scuttlebutt on how the fire started or where the fire originated?
- 23 Do you have any thoughts maybe?
- 24 A. No, I really haven't heard anything because I haven't seen
- 25 any deckhands since then, so -- and the captain, we're not

- 1 buddies. No, we just knew it was something in the engine room, I
- 2 presume. But what cause it? No idea.
- 3 Q. No idea?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
- 7 Q. Earlier you said that you heard the crew telling the
- 8 passengers to go to the bow.
- 9 A. Yes, go down the ladder in front of the bridge onto the bow.
- 10 Q. You also said that someone said that we're taking the boat
- 11 back to land?
- 12 A. You mean initially before we grounded the boat?
- 13 O. Yes.
- 14 A. We were headed back to the dock and then the flames popped
- 15 up, so that was no longer an option, so everybody was directed to
- 16 the bow and it was obvious the boat was heading into land. Land
- 17 was very close, so --
- 18 Q. And then you also said that someone said that you're getting
- 19 off the boat?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. Who was the crew? Do you know who they were to your
- 22 recollection?
- 23 A. Jon and Shawn and the captain was Mike. They did a good job.
- 24 Q. From your perspective, it sound like folks knew what to do?
- 25 I'm sorry, let me be more precise. The passengers had enough

direction to --Yes. Yes, they were given directions and they were pretty simple directions, because there was only one way down that ladder and they were told to go to the bow or go in front of the bridge down the ladder. And they had somebody at the top of the ladder to direct them to it, and then initially had somebody down there, but then after that I lost track because a lot of people were --UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. Thanks for your time, Mr. Crowe. CWO MR. CROWE: Okay. Thank you, sir. (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.) 2.4

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ON BOARD THE ISLAND LADY

PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA

JANUARY 14, 2018 Interview John Crowe

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18FM010

PLACE:

DATE: January 23, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Sandra McCurdy Transcriber